



The Gospel of John

Seeing is Believing

**Christ Redeemer Church
Sermon Series Study Guide
Winter 2021**

edited by Pastor Don Willeman, Th. M.

Special thanks to Anna Kaye Schulte for the sermon series artwork

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INTRODUCTION

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

~John 1:1, 14 (ESV)

“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

~John 20:30-31 (ESV)

“...if two thousand years of pious handling had not dimmed both John’s story and its demand, this gospel would still be seen as the burning outrage it continues to be, a work of madness or blinding revelation.”

~Reynolds Price (1933-2011), Duke University

Starting Sunday, January 17th, we will begin a special concentrated period of prayer (21 Days of Prayer), and, then the next Sunday, we will begin a new series of sermons on the Gospel of John. This study guide is intended to be a simple and basic way for us to engage in the sermon passages for each week’s upcoming sermon and to direct us in the next 21 Days of Prayer. Personally, I cannot think of anything more important and more helpful in these troubled times than to drop to our knees in prayer and direct our attention to the God who has come to us in Christ. I trust that both this series in the Gospel of John and these 21 Days of Prayer will help us do so.

The Gospel of John: An Introduction

There simply is no other document in all of human literature like the “Gospel According to John.” No other writing, except perhaps Paul’s epistle to the Romans, has had the kind of redemptive, transformative effect on human existence that John’s Gospel has.

Even within the corpus of Scripture—even among the other gospels—it stands apart in its own unique category. On its face it is a bundle of contradictions. The opening lines tell us that Jesus is the light of God that is both unstoppable and rejected (John 1:4-13). Jesus is presented most explicitly divine, and yet most obviously human. The Jesus of John explicitly claims equality with the Creator, while also explicitly suffering need and weakness. He thirsts and has to ask for water, but then in turn claims to be Living Water that satisfies our thirst eternally. He weeps at the death of a

friend and then proceeds, by the power of His own command, to raise him from the dead. This is nothing if not shockingly strange. Who is this man?

Perhaps no one in recent memory has grasped the uniqueness of this gospel better than the late Reynolds Price (1933-2011). The professor at Duke and prolific man of letters points out that:

“...a powerful case can still be made that this last gospel—little more than a pamphlet and written in a curiously shackled Greek prose—is the most outrageously demanding work, in any type of prose or verse, that had yet appeared in the West or Near East. Even its companion gospel Mark, some twenty-five years older and a reckless pioneer, is tamed a little in the dazzling light of John.” (*Three Gospels*, Reynolds Price, Touchstone/Simon & Schuster 1996, p. 128)

Price goes on to sum up the Jesus presented in John:

“The force that conceived and bore all things came here among us, proved his identity in visible human acts, was killed by men no worse than we, rose from death and walked again with his early believers, vowing eternal life beside him to those who also come to believe that he is God and loves us as much as his story shows.” (Price, p. 166)

To this summary, he then says:

“None of the other active world religions says anything remotely similar or comparable.... There is likewise no parallel in the theologies of John’s contemporaries – the dead myths of Greece or Rome, with their demigods and deified bureaucrats. ...John hands us a brand-new thing.” (Price, p. 167)

Jesus is, indeed, something brand-new, unlike anything we have seen before, and He has the power to make our lives new.

How to Use the Study and Prayer Guide

The date at the top of each page notes the Sunday for the respective week. The Scripture verse listed under each heading is a suggested memory verse. Below that you will find a passage of Scripture, followed by “*Reflection Questions*.” In general, these readings will allow you to reflect on the previous sermon or prepare you to hear the sermon for that upcoming week. We estimate that each day’s “lesson” should require no more than 15 minutes.

In addition, for the first 21 days, there are special prayer instructions that correspond with **CRC’s 21 Days of Prayer**. Please note the variety of gathered prayer events. For the **first week** we will have daily morning prayer

meetings on Zoom (Monday – Friday). The **second week** we are encouraging you to initiate prayer times on your own with family, friends, co-workers or members of your Community Group. Our hope is to facilitate many little pockets of prayer all over the Upper Valley. For the **third and final week**, you will find designated times of prayer for various groups (e.g. youth, men, women, DHMC, Dartmouth). We encourage you to take advantage of these group times. However, if you cannot make these particular times, nothing is keeping you from praying alone and following the items listed for each day.

To be clear, this guide and these times are not intended to be a “legalistic” requirement. Not at all! Rather, it is a way for us as a congregation to walk together as we explore God’s Word and petition our Father in heaven. And to what end? Our hope is that as we grow in our understanding and practice of daily prayer and meditation, we will grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ and so grow in our love for Him and one another.

A Word about Walking with Christ

Walking with Christ is a work that God is calling us to and, in a very profound sense, doing in us. As we will see in the Gospel of John, it is Jesus who calls us to discipleship (John 1), and it is Jesus who restores us to discipleship when we fail and fall (John 21). Without Him we can do nothing (John 15). This is why we call the message of Jesus the gospel (i.e. good news), because it is not about us but about Him. “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the pastoral and administrative staff and interns of our Hanover, New London, and Quechee churches who have collaborated to craft this study guide for the benefit of our congregations...and beyond.

In the name of the One who is full of grace and truth,

Don Willeman
January 2021
Hanover, NH

TUESDAY:

Scripture Reading: 1 John 1:1-4

Reflection Questions:

- What are some of the similarities and differences between this passage and John 1:1-5?

- Does your time with others in fellowship worshipping the Lord bring you the joy that John speaks of in this passage? Why or why not?

21 Days of Prayer: Churchwide gathering (7-7:45 AM)

Come and go as your schedule will allow

Zoom Link: <https://dartmouth.zoom.us/j/5560381407>

- Praise God for the gifts He gives us through being able to worship Him corporately as a church body.
- Praise God we have the ability to have a relationship with Him.
- Spend some time meditating on and praying through what God accomplished through Jesus's sacrifice for us in our sins on the cross.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 1:1-5

Reflection Questions:

- Why does it matter that the Word “was in the beginning with God?”

- What seems to be the purpose of equating Jesus with this “Word?”

21 Days of Prayer: Churchwide gathering (7-7:45 AM)

Come and go as your schedule will allow

Zoom Link: <https://dartmouth.zoom.us/j/5560381407>

- Praise God for showing us, through the eternal love community of the Trinity, what relationship with one another should look like.
- Praise God for being beyond our complete understanding and comprehension.
- Praise God for His majesty and the sheer vastness of His knowledge and power.
- Make a list of at least 4 things in creation that confuse you or cause you to wonder. Then spend some time praising God for knowing and creating the intricate details of every process in the universe.

THURSDAY:

Scripture Reading: 1 John 1:5-10

Reflection Questions:

- In what ways do you see yourself walking in darkness right now? Where have you seen God grow you in your ability to walk in the light?

- Why do you think John seems to put such an emphasis on NOT deceiving ourselves into thinking we are living without sin?

21 Days of Prayer: Churchwide gathering (7-7:45 AM)

Come and go as your schedule will allow

Zoom Link: <https://dartmouth.zoom.us/j/5560381407>

- Praise God for revealing our sin and thus our need for Him.
- Praise God for how His light has changed and grown you by shining into our darkness.
- Think of someone who you know and care about who is not a believer. Spend some dedicated time in pleading for God to speak into their life as he has into yours.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 1:1-5

Reflection Questions:

- What does it mean for Jesus to be the source of life and light?

- What does it mean for the “light of men” to shine in the darkness? What might the light and darkness represent?

21 Days of Prayer: Churchwide gathering (6:45-7:30 AM)

Come and go as your schedule will allow

Zoom Link: <https://dartmouth.zoom.us/j/5560381407>

- Praise God for revealing Himself in His Word – in Scripture.
- Turn to one of your favorite passages in Scripture. Pray through it, maybe even reading parts of it aloud, and praise God for how He has used that passage to encourage and/or challenge you.

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 1:1-18

Prayer:

- Pray that God would prepare our hearts and minds to receive His Word on Sunday.
- Praise God for the provision of a place to worship for the church, and praise Him for His provision in the midst of a uniquely difficult time.
- Praise God for how He is working in the midst of our building project on Greensboro Road.
- Praise God for working in and through difficult situations with imperfect people even when the problems seem insurmountable.

WEEK OF JANUARY 24th

Memory Verse:

"The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world."

~ John 1:9 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 1:1-5

Reflection Questions:

- Jot down one or two things that stood out to you from yesterday's sermon.

- Why do you think those things connected with you in particular?

- In what practical ways can you respond to what you learned and highlighted?

21 Days of Prayer: Plan your own time of prayer with family, friends, coworkers, or members of your Community Group. The goal this week is to have lots of little pockets of prayer in the community. It doesn't need to be a long meeting, but could be a brief time with others in whatever ways you can meet. Here are some things you could focus on, but don't feel limited by this:

- Pray for the Word of God to become real and alive to particular friends and family members.
- Make a list of 5 people who come to mind in this regard and pray for the light of Jesus to break through, that they might receive Him.
- Pray for God to provide opportunities for you to share the Word (Jesus) with them, and for courage and wisdom to do so.

TUESDAY:

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:9-16

21 Days of Prayer: See instructions from Monday.

- Spend some time meditating on this, or any other passages from God's Word (v. 13, 15).
- Spend some time giving thanks to God for the gift of His Word to us (v. 12, 14, 16).
- Ask God to teach you how to live according to His Word, and to empower you to do so (v. 9-11).

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 1:6-8, Mark 1:2-8

Reflection Questions:

- What do you think it means to be a "witness?"

- Based on these two passages, in what ways did John "bear witness" to the light of God?

- What was he hoping to accomplish through the work that he was doing?

- In what ways might we also live as witnesses to the light of Christ?

21 Days of Prayer: See instructions from Monday.

- Pray for the Word of God to become real and alive to certain neighbors and coworkers in your local community.
- Pray for the local church to be breaking through in communities. You can pray specifically for church plants that we are connected to:
 - Pray for **Steve and Linda Thiel** at Christ Proclamation Church of Windsor, CT and Manchester, CT. Pray for CPC as they continue to grow in the time of pandemic and extend their reach through church planting and church revitalization.
 - Pray for **Doug & Leah Cooper** at Christ Restoration Church in New London, NH. The Coopers were the first church plant sent out by CRC. Pray for their outreach and that God would continue to draw in new families at this difficult time.
 - Pray for **Ryan & Jenny Bouton** at The Quechee Church. Ryan Bouton was sent out from CRC to be the campus pastor, revitalizing this historic church in the center of Quechee, VT. Pray for their outreach and that God would continue to draw in new families at this difficult time.
 - Pray for **CRC's Church Planting Residency and Intern program**. Pray for the development of more housing. Pray for more intern and pastoral candidates. Pray that we would maintain our faithfulness and commitment to the gospel. Pray that God would supply their/our every need for this work.

THURSDAY:

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:17-24

21 Days of Prayer: See instructions from Monday.

- Ask God to open your eyes (your mind and heart) that you might see wonderful things in His Word (v. 18)!
- Ask God to meet you in those moments when you feel like a stranger in the world by revealing and making His Word alive to you (v. 19).
- Ask God to counsel you according to His Word in every area of your life and to make it your delight (v. 24).

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 1:9-13

Reflection Questions:

- List off everything that we learn about “the light” from verses 9 and 10.
- Take a moment to consider the profound humility of Jesus as you reread verses 10 and 11. Write down any thoughts you might have.
- According to verses 12 and 13, how do we become children of God?

21 Days of Prayer: See instructions from Monday.

- Pray for the Word of God to be going forward to all the nations, and to become real and alive to those who hear it!
- Pray for one or two people who you know serving abroad in Gospel ministry, asking for the light of Jesus to break through afresh in their lives, and through their lives. Pray for God to provide them with encouragement and perseverance, that they might not grow weary in the work they are doing. Please also pray specifically for missionaries that we are supporting as a church:
 - Pray for **Shadrach Vega** at Gospel Baptist Church of Bamenda, Cameroon and his church planters training center. CRC helped build their church building and have continued to finance significant portions of their pastoral training and church planting movements.
 - Pray for **Sam Jato** at Redeemer Baptist Church of Bamenda, Cameroon. CRC helped build their church building and continues to find ways to support their ministry.

- Pray for **Thangi Chhangte** in Northeast India doing Bible translation work. Thangi is a world class linguist who is doing ground breaking gospel work in hard to reach places.
- Pray for **Matt & Tara Megill** and their work at a hospital in central Africa. They and their colleagues provide critical health care for their neighbors. Pray for Matt, Tara and their family, as well as their witness for Christ.
- Pray for **Stefan & Antje Beyer** and **Thomas & Anja Koch** of Evangeliumsgemeinde Jena in Jena, Germany. This is a church they planted and are leading right at the door step of the prestigious Friedrich Schiller University. Pray as they continue to grow their ministry through challenging time of the pandemic.
- Pray for **Ternes Church and the Nelson family** ministering in Northwest Paris. Six months ago, Eduard Nelson, the long standing pastor, died in a tragic accident. Pray for his wife and young children and for the transition of the ministry at his loss.

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 1:6-13

Prayer:

- Pray for our time of worship together tomorrow morning—that God would cause His Word to break through in our lives!
- Ask God to encourage and inspire all who will facilitate our worship service tomorrow morning.
- Pray that God would impact our time by His Spirit, causing Jesus to be clearly seen and widely embraced.

WEEK OF JANUARY 31st

Memory Verse:

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."

~ John 1:14 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 1:6-13

Reflection Questions:

- Take a moment to reflect on two or three things stood out to you from yesterday's sermon.
- How do these things reorient you in the pressures that you feel today?
- What practical steps might you take to respond to what God is saying?

21 Days of Prayer: Youth & Youth Leaders Prayer (8:15-9 PM)

All are welcome! Come and go as your schedule will allow
Prayer will take place after youth group at the CCB

- Pray in response to what you were reflecting on above
- Praise God for how He has shown His glory to everyone by creating the world, through the way that He has acted in history, and through the stamp of His creative seal on every one of us.
- Praise God for how He has revealed Himself to us (through His Word and through His Son). Pray that He would help us see and know Him more and more. And more.
- Pray for your friends who have not yet seen the glory of Jesus, that He would give them the sight to believe in His name.
- Pray for God's work among us that we would be helping us grow closer to Him and help each other grow closer to Him. Pray for specific people He brings to mind.

TUESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 1:14-18

Reflection Questions:

- Why is it significant that the Word became flesh?
- What is the glory of the only Son from the Father?
- What does it mean that Jesus was full of grace AND truth and that these came through Him? Spend some time meditating on the reality that Jesus was not just some truth and some grace, but *full* of both.

21 Days of Prayer: DHMC prayer (6-6:45 PM)

Come and go as your schedule will allow

Zoom Link: <https://dartmouth.zoom.us/j/5560381407>

- Praise God for not being miserly, but being a God of overflowing abundance who pours out “grace upon grace” from His fullness.
- Pray that He would help us to comprehend the unfathomable mystery that Jesus is full of grace *and* truth.
- Pray that God would continue to break through our fear and cold-heartedness to be overflowing with God’s abundant grace.
- Pray that as a church we would be characterized as people full of truth—precise, candid, and faithful to the whole counsel of God. Pray that we as a church would be full of grace—overflowing with genuine love, compassion, and interest in the lives of those around us.
- Pray for people around you who you know need an experience of God’s grace and truth.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: Exodus 33:14-34:9

Reflection Questions:

- What stands out to you from this passage?
- Why does this passage teach us about God's glory?
- Notice how God communicates who He is. What does He emphasize? How does the way that He communicates about Himself match up with how you tend to think about Him in your day-to-day life?
- What does Moses communicate is the most important thing for us to pursue as God's people? What is it that makes us distinct? How does this provide orientation for how you pursue the tasks before you?

21 Days of Prayer: Women's prayer, (8-9 PM)

Come and go as your schedule will allow

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kehJlwZvA6>

(passcode: 545320)

- Praise God for who He is—that He is full of grace and truth—steadfast love and faithfulness. Pray that we would increasingly shine as those who are full of both.
- Confess the ways that you miss the mark on what is most important.
- Pray that God would reveal His glory more and more to us. Pray that what we see here about who God is would increasingly define our “functional theology.”
- Pray for those around you who you know are struggling to see God's steadfast love and faithfulness or His justice. Pray that He would be revealing these things to them and showing you how you might be a part of that process.

THURSDAY:

Scripture Reading: Psalm 103

21 Days of Prayer: Men's prayer (7-745 AM)

Come and go as your schedule will allow

Zoom Link: <https://dartmouth.zoom.us/j/5560381407>

- Praise God for His mercy—that “He does not treat us as our sins deserve,” that He “remembers that we are dust” and “forgives all our iniquities,” that “as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us.”
- Praise God for His grace—that He “crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,” “that He satisfies you with good,” that “as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him” and that this steadfast love is “from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him.”
- Ask God to reveal places where you are not reflecting the reality of God’s mercy and grace and places where you are trying to cover over your transgressions on your own.
- Pray that God would allow us to be conduits of this mercy and grace to the world around us, and that as He does He would be opening eyes to see this glory.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: Psalm 19

Reflection Questions:

- What stands out to you from this Psalm?

- What seems to be the logic of the psalmist? Why do you think this is?

- What does this Psalm teach us about God's glory?

21 Days of Prayer: Dartmouth (9-9:45 AM)

Zoom Link: <https://dartmouth.zoom.us/j/5560381407>

- Pray this Psalm for our campus.
- Praise God for how He has revealed Himself to everyone, even those who suppress this knowledge of Him (Rom 1).
- Pray for those around you who are wrestling with the truth, that God would set them free from the deceiver to see the light of God's glorious grace.
- Pray that God would be revealing all the places that we as His people might be blind to our sin. Pray that He would be making us shine with His purity, His love, His humility, His courage, and His wisdom as we look to our great Rock and Redeemer.
- Pray for God's truth to flourish on the Dartmouth campus and that His Spirit would be awakening students and staff to Himself.

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 1:1-18

Prayer:

- Pray for the our worship service tomorrow—that God would be awakening faith in us that would help us to endure in living in the fullness of grace and truth over the long haul.
- Ask God to encourage and inspire all who will facilitate our worship service tomorrow morning.
- Pray that God would fill our time together with His presence and bring His light to transform our inner darkness.

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 7th

Memory Verse:

“...Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.”

~ *John 1:29-31 (ESV)*

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 1:14-18

Reflection Questions:

- What did you learn from the sermon yesterday? What made an impression on you?
- How did this alter your view of Jesus and your life in Him?
- What has changed about your attitude as a result? Your actions?

Prayer:

- God, I pray that your Word would dwell in us richly, and make me more like my Savior, Jesus Christ! I long for you to conform these parts of my life to His image...
- Heavenly Father, I trust you for my needs, my desires, and my hopes this week. (Specifically, I am trusting you for...)

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 1:19-28

Reflection Questions:

- Why does John make sure to tell those questioning him: “among you stands one you do not know?” Why does he say this?

- How does John see Jesus? In other words, how is Jesus different than him? Why is this significant?

Prayer:

- Heavenly Father, we are not worthy to unstrap the sandal of your glorious Son! And yet, He humbled Himself and took the form of a bond servant for us. We pray that you work this attitude of Christ in us.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 1:29-34

Reflection Questions:

- What is the first thing John says when he encounters his cousin (Jesus)? How does this inform your thinking about the character, identity, and work of Jesus? To help process this, take a few moments to list all of the identifiers John uses about Jesus in these verses and meditate on them.

- How does John encounter the Holy Spirit? For what purpose? Why is this important?

Prayer:

- Heavenly Father, I pray that you would give me eyes to see and a heart to understand who Jesus is and what He has done for me.
- My God, who am I that your Spirit would descend and remain in me as He did Jesus! Thank you for sealing my soul in Christ Jesus for your glory and kingdom!

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 1:19-34

Prayer:

- Lord of Heaven, be near your people as we gather for worship in the morning!
- Our God, show the truth and the beauty of Christ to us and to our community!

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 14th

Memory Verse:

And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

~ John 1:51 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 1:35-37

Reflection Questions:

- What did you learn from the sermon yesterday? What made an impression on you?

- What should you change about your attitude as a result? Your actions?

Prayer:

- God, I pray that your Word would dwell in us richly, and make me more like my Savior, Jesus Christ!
- Heavenly Father, I trust you for my needs, my desires, and my hopes this week.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 1:38-42

Reflection Questions:

- What did the disciples think John meant when he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"? What does his declaration tell you about Jesus and what he came to do for you?

- What does it mean for Jesus to be the Messiah? How does meeting Jesus affect these people?

Prayer:

- My God, forgive me for my sins! Thank you for the sacrifice that Jesus is for me!
- Lord, help me to grow in trust, obedience, and love for Jesus.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 1:43-51

Reflection Questions:

- What relationship do the disciples see between Jesus and God's Word? Why does Nathaniel object?

- Why is Nathanael amazed by Jesus? What does Jesus promise will amaze him in the future?

Prayer:

- Heavenly Father, I pray that you would give me eyes to see and a heart to understand your Word.
- My God, I humble myself before you; I am content to wait on your promises.

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: John 1:35-51

Prayer:

- Lord of Heaven, be near your people as we gather for worship in the morning!
- Our God, show the truth and the beauty of Christ to us and to our community!



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